

CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE

Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall



Congress is the forum where elected representatives address issues facing the nation. These issues sometimes arise from conflicting ideas within the nation, or from the pressures of world events. By providing a place for debate and compromise, Congress has led the nation through challenging times.



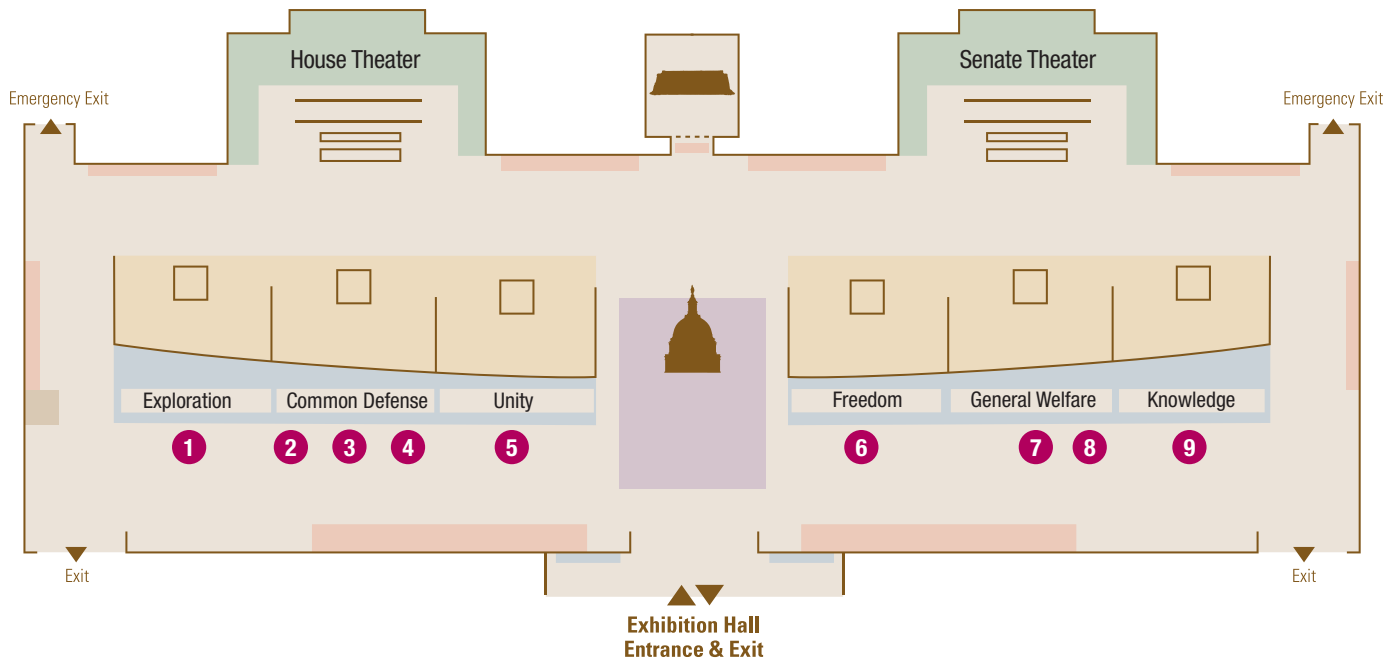
U.S. CAPITOL

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Currently on display



1 Sketch from the Office of the Mexican Boundary Survey, n.d.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the war with Mexico in 1848 added more than 525,000 square miles of western territory to the United States. Members of Congress, recognizing the potential of this territory for settlement, fiercely debated whether or not to allow slavery there. This map shows the area south of the Rio Gila, which is now part of Arizona.

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives and Records Administration

THE MEXICAN WAR AND THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

War between the United States and Mexico arose from disputes regarding their international boundary and U.S. attempts to expand its territory into Mexico. In March 1848, the U.S. Senate approved for ratification the treaty ending the Mexican War, which was signed in Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico, on February 2. The treaty redefined the U.S.-Mexico border and extended U.S. territory to the Pacific coast, intensifying congressional debates about the westward extension of slavery.

2 **Battle of Buena Vista**, color lithograph by J. Baillie

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



3 **Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Mejico [Map of the United States of Mexico]** by J. Disturnell, 1847

Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress

4 **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**, manuscript, signed with wax seals, February 2, 1848

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress



5 **Where's My Thunder?** lithograph by anonymous artist, 1850

The Compromise of 1850, which addressed the conflict over issues related to slavery, provoked one of the Senate's most famous debates, most notably between Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. In this satirical print, Webster "steals the thunder" from Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, who proposed the compromise.

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress





6 *The Fifteenth Amendment*, lithograph with watercolor, ca. 1870-1874

After the Civil War, many suffragists who had worked to abolish slavery hoped Congress would guarantee full civil rights for all citizens, regardless of race or sex. Instead, the Fifteenth Amendment banned discrimination on the basis of race or color, but not gender.

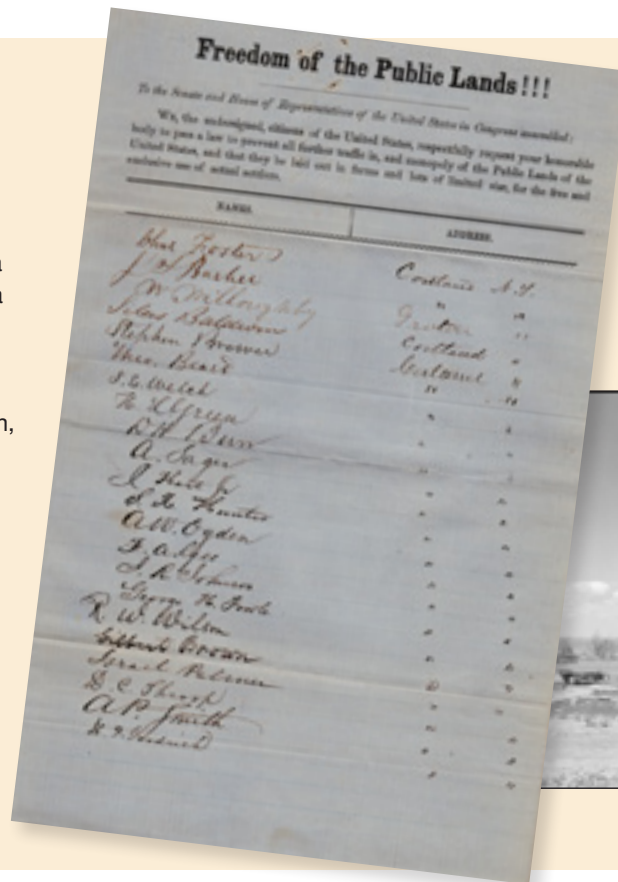
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

THE HOMESTEAD ACT

With the Homestead Act of 1862, the federal government awarded a 160-acre plot to any citizen or intended citizen who claimed it by dwelling on it for a designated period and paying a fee. Congress had considered numerous homestead bills since the 1840s, but Southern senators routinely blocked them, wanting the land reserved for slaveholders. After 11 Southern states seceded in 1860-1861, the Homestead Act passed.

7 *"Freedom of the Public Lands!!!"* petition from citizens of New York, 1860

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives and Records Administration



8 *Sod House, Pennington County, South Dakota*, photograph by Arthur Rothstein, May 1936

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



9 *"Anybody Working?"* cartoon by Jim Berryman, October 6, 1957

The Soviet Union's successful 1957 launch of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, spurred Congress to pass the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. The act committed the federal government to its most active role in education since the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862.

U.S. Senate Collection, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration

Looking at Documents

The National Defense Education Act

The Soviet Union's successful 1957 launch of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, spurred Congress to pass the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. Congress perceived an urgent need to train Americans in science, technology, languages, and other essential skills for Cold War defense.

Political cartoonist Jim Berryman captured America's anxious response to the successful launch of the Soviet satellite.

Look at the cartoon (see number 9 on the map to locate the original in Exhibition Hall). Does the shape of the observatory remind you of another building?

The sign in front of the observatory says, "Do Not Disturb....Men Watching!" How does this contrast with the title of the cartoon?

What is the cartoonist saying and who is he addressing? Are there other clues in the cartoon that strengthen the artist's message?

"Anybody Working?" cartoon by Jim Berryman, October 6, 1957

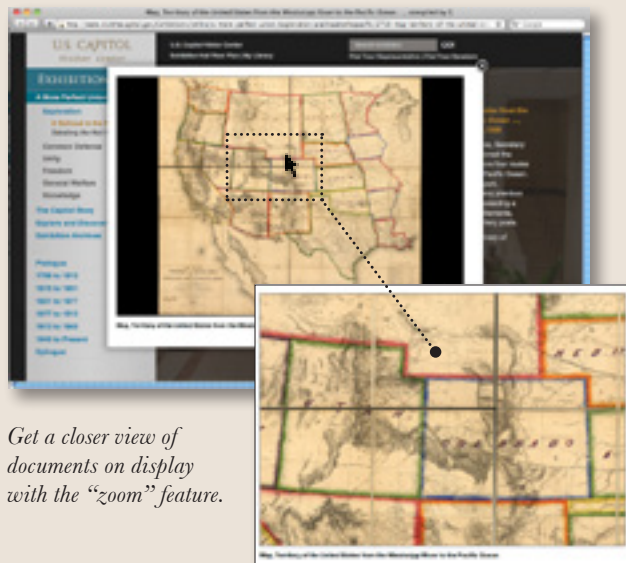
*U.S. Senate Collection, Center for Legislative Archives,
National Archives and Records Administration*





Exhibition Hall Online

Explore the Capitol Visitor Center's online exhibition. Find out more about the fascinating artifacts and documents in Exhibition Hall that tell the story of the history of Congress and the building of the Capitol at www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions.



Get a closer view of documents on display with the "zoom" feature.

A More Perfect Union

"Conflict and Compromise" is the theme of the documents currently on display in the exhibit **A More Perfect Union**. This section of Exhibition Hall illustrates the role of Congress in defining and helping to realize national goals and aspirations. Treasured documents from the National Archives and the Library of Congress trace the journey toward "a more perfect union" through the actions of Congress. Documents illustrating "Conflict and Compromise" are arranged in six thematic sections – **Exploration, Common Defense, Unity, Freedom, General Welfare, and Knowledge.**



The United States Capitol is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Saturday. It is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Inauguration Day.

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